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JPRS L/9130

6 June 1980

Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 20/80)



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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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INTER-ARAB

ALGERIAN-LIBYAN AGREEMENTS SIGNED

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 25 Apr 80 p 971

[Text] Established under the terms of an agreement signed between Algeria and Libya in December 1969, with the mission of strengthening relations in the economic, commercial, cultural, information, and technical fields, the Mixed Algerian-Libyan Mission held its fourth meeting in Tripoli between 5 and 8 April. The purpose was to evaluate the results of the agreements concluded in this field between the two countries and to mobilize resources capable of providing dynamic impetus and stepping up bilateral cooperation in the various areas in keeping with the aspirations of both countries.

Several documents were initialed during this fourth meeting, in particular, an agreement on manpower, an execution program in the field of information, an execution program in the field of youth and sports, and minutes of the meeting covering cooperation in the economic, commercial, and industrial areas.

In the commercial area, in particular, the two parties agreed on the creation of a mixed chamber of commerce to be established next September. The two parties affirmed the need for increasing the volume of trade. They asked the producer and exporter agencies of both countries to take initiatives with a view to providing dynamic impetus for economic cooperation and encouraging cooperation in the field of group purchasing regarding basic consumer goods.

In the industrial area, the two parties agreed on the creation of two mixed companies, the first one in the field of geophysics, and the second one in the field of petroleum prospecting and production. The two parties asserted their desire to step up coordination, exchange of visits and experiences in the various industrial sectors, especially iron, steel, aluminum, the machine-building industry, as well as electrical and electronic equipment.

In the area of water power, the two parties agreed on the creation of a mixed company for well drilling. In agriculture, the two parties expressed their desire to exchange experiences and technicians between

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the two countries. In keeping with its possibilities, Algeria will be responsible for training and for training courses to be given to Libyan students and technicians in the field of agriculture.

In the transportation and communications fields, the two parties made important decisions designed to strengthen the mixed Algerian-Libyan maritime transportation company and to give it new opportunities with a view to its advancement and its development in the interest of both countries.

The signing of these accords by Mr Mohamed Seddik Benyahia, Algerian minister of foreign affairs, and Dr Abdesalam Triki, Libyan secretary for foreign affairs, expressed the mutual desire to bring out--in all sectors of bilateral cooperation--the good understanding existing on the political level, an understanding which has just received new demonstration through the recognition, by Libya, of the Saharan Republic.

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AFGHANISTAN

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS DISCUSSED DURING INTERVIEW

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 212, 28 Apr-11 May 80 pp 42-43

[Interview of Anahita Ratebzad, minister of education, by special correspondent in Kabul, Wilfred Burchett--date and place not given]

[Text] Dr Anahita Ratebzad, minister of education, is no ordinary person. A famous woman in her country, she charms as much by the clarity of her reports as she does with her smile.

She is a seasoned revolutionary, a "historic" one, since she is a member of the core of seven women founded the first Afghan feminist organization, at the time of the birth (1 January 1965) of the People's Democratic Party (PDPA). A member of the Central Committee of the party, she belonged to the Parcham wing, whose cadres were expelled and persecuted under the Amin regime. Immediately after the ouster of Daoud, in April 1978, she was named ambassador to Belgrade. She returned to Afghanistan clandestinely a few weeks before 27 December 1979, and was actively involved, with the leaders of the reunified party, in the overthrow of the Amin regime.

Appointed minister of National Education, she has tackled a difficult task. Her replies in the interview below reflect her consciousness of the heavy responsibilities confronting her.

[Question] Could you describe the problems that you will have to face in the field of education?

[Answer] Because of the economic and social conditions of our country, the people could not be aware of the need for education. They did not have the material means for sending their children to school. Consequently, 96 percent of the women and 90 percent of the men are illiterate. That is a major national problem, not only for the government of the Party, but for the entire nation.

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After the Daoud revolution (the overturning of the monarchy, in July 1973, directed by King Zahir Shah and his cousin and brother-in-law Mohammed Daoud), the people expected great changes, in education among other things. Later, when we seized power through the revolution of 1978, there was a general assurance that we were going to help the people in all fields. But the party and the government were infiltrated by the CIA, and we were not able to put into application the progressive policies of the Daoud constitution in matters of education.

Instead of using methods of persuasion, the Amin government practiced an authoritarian policy in dealing with the people. Administrative decrees were issued forcing men only to begin learning to read and write. This was impossible. In our country, feudalism is very different from the European romantic conception of feudalism. But it has values and traditions which demand respect. By trying to use force, the Amin regime ran counter to all the religious and cultural traditions and the family relations of our people.

The people have lost their confidence in us. One example of the unrealistic approach of the previous regime is the attempt to mobilize a million people in the first year of the literacy campaign. In fact, 500,000 people have been touched, among whom only three percent are women....

[Question] In what ways do your methods differ from those applied during the Amin regime?

[Answer] We believe in a gradual approach, respecting the traditions and religion of our people. We have mobilized all those who already have some background: intellectuals, mollahs in the mosques, teachers. We are working within the army, the labor unions, women's and youth organizations, to promote the campaign. Whenever we can get citizens to study together, we do so.

The Koran is a precious source of teachings, and an asset in our fight against prejudice with regard to the education of girls, and against the obscurantist ideas spread among the people by the feudals.

We have sent women's cadres into the villages and opened day care centers throughout the country--which even men have found useful, thinking that it frees their women for longer hours in the fields. Day care centers are a fertile ground for recruiting women for education. They are "for women," "by women." We go there to persuade them to learn to read and write too; we also go into the homes, the farms and the fields where they work. But the cost of getting things to move as much as they should will be great. We need international help.

[Question] Have you contacted UNESCO? By its nature, that organization should be in favor of such projects.

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[Answer] The problem is that UNESCO allocated 40 million dollars to the campaign launched by the previous regime, which left us a legacy of stupidity, ill will and ill repute. An organization such as UNESCO must, of course, see the results of its aid. And since there are none...

[Question] The Amin regime had boasted that it would abolish illiteracy in 5 years. Do you also have a timetable?

[Answer] We are not looking for prestigious results. We want to establish a solid base of our people's education. Progress will go hand in hand with the building of the country. Another 15 years may be needed for our literacy campaign to achieve complete success, in view of the state of our economic and social development. We will study the methods used in Vietnam, Angola, Cuba, and Ethiopia, and will take advantage of their experience.

[Question] Aside from this campaign, what is going on in the field of education?

[Answer] It's a very difficult problem. Only 12 to 15 percent of school age children receive a normal formal education. Since we lack everything, classes are most often conducted in the summer, outdoors. The children sit on the ground, and there is a desk and a chair for the teacher. There is no school equipment for the winter in most localities. The curriculum consists of four main subjects according to the region: Pashtu, a local language (Persian, Uzbek or other), the Koran, and mathematics. Until now we have organized special schools, only for boys from 10 to 14 years old, where they take intensive courses to complete a normal 4-year primary education in 2 years.

[Question] Is there a teacher problem? (Here, Anahita has a gesture of helplessness).

[Answer] Only one-tenth of a percent are teachers who have achieved the Twelfth Grade level. We send them out as teachers as soon as they have finished the sixth grade, with the hope that they will catch up later with further courses. This is part of our terrible shortage of school teachers.

In 1979 we lost 1,100 schools, burned by reactionary forces. Such are the results of the brutal methods applied by the previous regime, which was striving for "statistical success" with no real basis! Many teachers and students were killed in the course of these extortions. Now we are organizing 2- to 4-week seminars to train substitutes for those who died. Soviet advisers give us a lot of help in this matter, for they had similar problems after the Second World War.

We used to teach only in Pashtu and in Dari. Now we have added Turkmen, Uzbek and Baluchi. Until now we were not able to publish school books for courses of more than 2 years, but we are now printing third and fourth year texts. We are going to run short of paper and print, but our Soviet friends help us in this field also.

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We need colleges for the education of teachers and dormitories for the students. We are short of everything, but particularly of cadres. The old regime killed about 7,000 members of the PDPA [People's Democratic Party] and their sympathizers, including a large proportion of the cadres in education.

[Question] Would you discuss the women's movement, how it was launched, and how it has developed?

[Answer] The Democratic Organization of Women was formed in 1965. This was the first time that such an organization existed. Under our feudal, semi-tribal system, women had no status. They were exploited by their fathers, husbands and brothers--even by their sons. A male baby was the "master" of his mother and sisters.

The result was that Afghan women had no personality, no self-confidence. They accepted their destiny as objects to be used according to men's desires. It seemed impossible to change this, for, in the beginning, we were only seven women facing the existing order. Our first step was to reach a few intellectual men who acknowledged the importance of the question of women's rights.

Before the 1978 revolution I had traveled in the USSR and India, and had some notions about the progress of women, even in countries with sizable Muslim minorities. (Anahita Ratebzad and Bagrak Karmal were deputies of the PDPA, representing Kabul in the Afghan National Assembly. Anahita was therefore able to visit foreign countries as part of the parliamentary delegations).

At the time of the Amin revolution, the number of our members mounted to 2,000, with, in addition, some 2,500 active sympathizers. We had great hopes. Things had developed well, and were getting better and better. Our hopes were soon dashed. In mid-July (1978) I was sent as ambassador to Belgrade, then I was excluded from the party. Once the movement had been decapitated, Amin set out to crush it entirely. Militants were imprisoned, tortured, killed. One of the values of Afghan feudalism was that women were never put in prison. Amin did not respect that tradition. He imprisoned and killed many of our girls.

Since Amin's overthrow we have tried to regroup the survivors, and we are planning to form an All-Afghan Women's Council [sic] to be able to mobilize our women and orient them toward their new responsibilities--which include a decisive role in their own self-education and in that of the young.

But, she added, closing our interview with her radiant smile, in order to have a complete picture of women's activities, you must speak to my Comrade Soraya, one of the first seven women, who today directs the Democratic Organization of Women...

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ALGERIA

ALGERIAN-ITALIAN PIPELINE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 25 Apr 80 p 971

[Text] Algerian gas is scheduled to arrive in Italy at the end of 1981; construction work on the 2,500-kilometer gas pipeline, linking the field at Hassi R'Mel and the Northern part of Italy is on schedule according to the managers of SONATRACH (Algerian National Hydrocarbons Company) and SNAM [National Gas Pipeline Company] (Italy) on 17 April.

One of the three lines, designed to cross the Mediterranean between Tunisia and Sicily, will have been laid completely by the end of April. The record depth level in the ocean of 608 meters was reached in laying this line with a length of 160 kilometers.

SONATRACH and SNAM officials, representing the companies that are building the gas pipeline through a common branch, called the Transmediterranean Company, provided these data during the signing of a new loan agreement for \$100 million to finance the underwater section from Tunisia to Sicily.

This loan was granted by a syndicate of international banks directed by Amsterdam-Rotterdam Bank, Banca Commerciale Italiana, Overseas Limited, Bank of America International, Bankers Trust International, Banque Européenne de Credit, Credit Lyonnais, Instituto Bancario Sao Paulo di Torino and Nippon European Bank. Credit Lyonnais is the bank which coordinates this syndicate of banks.

The loan is made up of a portion of \$70 million running over a period of 10 years, granted at the going rate of $+ 3/4$ for the first 8 years, a rate of $+ 7/8$ for the last 2 years, and a loan of \$30 million over a period of 12 years at the going rate of $+ 15/16$. In autumn 1978, two loans, in an amount of \$210 million and \$100 million, were granted for the purpose of financing this project.

Originally considered a "risky deal," this gas pipeline today is an "exceptional success," illustrating the combined efforts of hydrocarbon producer and consumer countries, according to a comment made by the SONATRACH representative.

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In 1977, Algeria committed itself to delivering 295 billion cubic meters to Italy over a period of 25 years through this gas pipeline. The gas pipeline's initial capacity will be 8.3 billion cubic meters per year in order finally to reach a figure of 18.5 billion cubic meters per year. Italy will then become the first European customer for Algerian gas, ahead of France, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

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IRAN

BRIEFS

U.S. ACCUSED OF CHEMICAL DROP--Teheran, 13 May (PL)--The newspaper BAMDAD has reported that five U.S. helicopters last night dropped a chemical substance on the Persian Gulf on the border with Iran, causing a large fire. The fire spread on the surface of the water, according to the report, which described the action as a provocation against the Iranian Government. This action, BAMBAD said, forms a part of the aggressive plans of the United States against Iran which are designed to cause the revolution to fail. [Text] [PA131400 Havana PRELA in Spanish 1350 GMT 13 May 80]

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ISRAEL

WRITER DISCUSSES PROBLEMS CAUSED BY SETTLEMENTS

Tel Aviv NEW OUTLOOK in English May 80 pp 22-24

[Text] On March 14, 1980, the "Jerusalem Post" published an article by its military correspondent Hirsh Goodman, under the title "Settlement and Security". The following are excerpts from the article.

Nothing in Israeli political life has become more complicated since the Likud took office than the relationship of settlement and security. For 10 years, between 1967 and 1977, settlement continued quietly in the administered territories in conjunction with an accepted strategic concept of our security needs. Suddenly, settlement has become the bane of our lives...

The source of the trouble is that the well-worn security arguments have become entangled with biblical prophecy and historic rights, and while some of Israel's friends can accept that there can be no retreat to the pre-Six Day War lines, they are finding it increasingly difficult to understand the security rationale for settling three houses in Hebron.

The Labor Alignment had established a settlement policy on the following general lines — it would take place in strategically important areas devoid of Arab inhabitants; when the time came for making peace with our neighbors, there would be territorial compromises whereby Israel would retain the strategically important settled areas while returning the Arab-populated enclaves to the relevant sovereign bodies.

The logic of this was clear, even if there was no realistic hope that the Arabs would ever accept it. But the Likud's policy was a complete antithesis.

For Premier Begin and his coalition partners, *Eretz Yisrael* was a single and indivisible unit that included the West Bank and Gaza by biblical and historical right. It could never be given up or even compromised on. Settlement was seen as a means not only of establishing a *de facto* Israeli presence in strategically vital areas but also of obliterating the "Green Line" so that pre-1967 Israel and *Eretz Yisrael* became one unit in which any Jew had the right to settle...

Security vs. Historical Arguments

Nobody was buying the theme of historical right. Relations with the US were quickly strained to a point where the financial aid package seemed to be in danger; Palestinian claims gained in popularity in Western Europe; the international Jewish community strongly opposed settlement in territories still considered occupied. Most important of all, perhaps, relations with Israeli and West Bank Arabs deteriorated disastrously.

The Government was shocked into reverting to the old security arguments and downplaying the historical ones — until the increasingly influential Gush Emunim, with the support of the fringe partners in the coalition, jockeyed it into words and actions that undermined any attempt to explain its security need for the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan. Sinai, thanks to the peace treaty with Egypt, was no longer an issue...

Are another two settlements in Judea more important for the nation's security than 20 more tanks, for example? Are they worth a further erosion in Israel's relations with the US and Egypt? Are settlements a guarantee of continued Israeli retention of the territories, or will their fate be the same as those along the Red Sea coast and the Rafiah salient?...

It is important to remember, too, that one is speaking not only about the retention of land but, certainly in the case of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, about the retention of large Arab populations.

There is also the question of how, in time of war, the outpost settlements will fit into overall defence strategy. Minutes after the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, the IDF ordered the evacuation of several front-line settlements on the Golan Heights. Moreover, what was always intended as a front line of Israeli defense in the initial stages of a war in fact served as a front-line support post for the Syrian attack.

The Tactical Liability

One also has to consider the tactical demand that will be placed on the IDF — about 80 per cent of it from reserve units that may take up to 72 hours to field — to protect the 60-odd pockets of Israeli settlement in the administered territories in the event of another surprise attack. In addition to having to stall the enemy advance, the tiny standing army, already heavily outnumbered in men and weapons, will also be fragmented by the need to rush in 60 different directions to the aid of civilians.

different view of permanent Israeli domination of the administered territories, secured by the establishment of armed civilian camps in the Arab heartland.

To protect these would require an expenditure on reservists that would slice still further into his already unprecedentedly tight defense budget, and this consideration has no doubt played an important part in formulating his stand on settlement...

A Growing Unwillingness to Serve

A government publication, THE WEEKLY MEDIA ABSTRACT, argued this week that the establishment of a Jewish presence in the territories will reduce terrorist activity. This is so patently absurd that it hardly warrants a response. If anything, one can say that such settlement, particularly in

who have suddenly found themselves surrounded by a hostile population.

The feasibility of settlements as a function of defense seems doubtful. On analysis, one suspects that they actually hamper the smooth conduct of war and the country's ability to deal cohesively with a frontal attack.

While there is no arguing that the retention of the West Bank and the Golan Heights (but certainly not Gaza) is desirable from a security point of view, there is no evidence that settlement is the best means of retaining them. Moreover, planting civilian populations close to the border counteracts all those arguments we have heard for so long about the danger of having Netanya and Tel Aviv "just nine miles from the frontier."

Would it not be wiser to station armed forces in these areas, their only purpose to protect the strategically important approaches to Israel? The argument used against this is that a military presence alone will not guarantee that Judea, Samaria and Gaza will remain under Israeli control, because it is by its very nature temporary. Surely the answer to this lies in Sinai. Civilian settlement there followed a clear-cut strategic concept. But when it came to the peace agreement, Israel was unable to hold on to one square millimeter.

It is not by chance that Defense Minister Ezer Weizman is one of the main critics of the Government's implementation of settlement policy. Formerly regarded as one of the most vocal hawks in the Herut camp, since accepting office he has taken a very

the midst of Arab populations, as it has been carried out by this Government in the last two years, can only inspire terror--both directly, by providing easy targets; or by implication, by fostering Palestinian nationalism.

The more Jewish centers there are in the midst of Arab populations, the larger the military force required to protect them. The more uniformed personnel in evidence, maintaining the law, enforcing the curfews, carrying out the security checks, the greater the resentment of the locals. A greater Jewish presence means more police action, and more police action means greater restrictions on the population.

A good example was provided at Jalazoun earlier this month, when security forces hauled the entire village (actually a refugee camp) out into the cold in the middle of the night to check who had been throwing stones at the cars of settlers from Ofra and Beit El during the day. This kind of thing cannot do much to put an end to terrorism.

...There can be absolutely no doubt in anyone's mind that the protracted Israeli occupation of the territories has had a negative effect on the morale of the armed forces. Sharp ideological differences are developing among the country's youth. There is a growing unwillingness to serve in typical "occupying" roles, such as enforcing a curfew, or fighting 16-year-old school girls who throw rocks...

That the number of people opposed to that policy is significant is demonstrated in

two ways: the increase in the number of new recruits who either refuse to serve at all, or who demand that they not be sent to the territories; and the huge "Peace Now" demonstrations which have, according to the army itself, included officers and men from front-line units...

Until now, the alternatives in terms of security were clear cut. If the country was attacked, its existence put in jeopardy, there was no clash between a man's or woman's personal ideology and the determination to defend Israel. This was true in any circumstances, and that is why there has never been a conflict in Israel until now about the socialist, universalist education of the kibbutz movement on the one hand, and the willingness to volunteer for the most arduous of military units on the other.

The Question of Morale

There was no contradiction in being educated towards co-existence and fighting for existence. Today, it seems, there is a distinction, because the threat has changed. The enemy is no longer on the other side of the border with a national consensus as to what constitutes a *casus belli*. There is no universal perception of the inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and Gaza as a common enemy, or of how to deal with them. There is no agreement as to whether a legitimate duty of the IDF is to defend a Jewish presence in Hebron that has been imposed on the country and its government by a minority. There is general confusion that grows with each passing day, fostered by the arguments within the cabinet itself...

The question of morale, being closely allied to the IDF's qualitative edge, becomes even more important in the light of the

confrontation states' purchases of vast quantities of the most sophisticated weaponry, and coupled with their growing opposition to the peace process. Add to this the threat to the peace process itself and to American-Israel relations in the context of the stalled autonomy talks, and national morale and its place as part of Israel's overall deterrent posture takes on a new importance.

There is no clear concept as to what is necessary from a security point of view, and what is integral to the Jewishness of Israel. There is a clear concept about what issues we are prepared to fight for, and what we are prepared to compromise on...

The total lack of consistency in Israel's arguments, and the promotion of settlement based on historical right under the poor guise of security, has undermined the credibility of all our claims, regardless of their

justice. It has led to confusion among our allies, who are having a hard time explaining Israel's case. It has played into the hands of our enemies, who are making daily capital out of the sad state of affairs.

Current developments in the UN, Western Europe and the US have not all been fed by the energy crisis. Israel's policies (or lack of them) on the West Bank have had a lot to do with the growing support for the Palestinians, and the erosion in identification with Israel, which is being perceived increasingly as a militaristic state enforcing its will at the expense of civil liberties...

The time has now come for a new articulation of the practical, and the casting off of old illusions. Only then can policy be moulded into a strategy. And only then, perhaps, will settlement once again be able to be perceived as a function of the security needs of Israel.

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ISRAEL

COMMUNIST IN THE WEST BANK

Tel Aviv NEW OUTLOOK in English May 80 pp 18-21

[Article by Amnon Kapeliuk]

[T Recently, Israeli broadcasting has begun to de-
s PLO supporters in the West Bank as "moderates",
wh the Communists are being categorized as "extrem-
ists or "rejectionists". This novel terminology sug-
gests that the military occupation authorities view the
left and the Communists as the principal enemy, and all
other elements in the occupied territories as less
dangerous. Closer study shows that it is fear of an
independent and highly-organized political force con-
sistently hostile to the Camp David accords which has
given rise to these definitions.

The independence of the West Bank Com-
munists and the Left has recently been de-
monstrated during the Bassam Shaq'a affair.
While the mayors of the townships in the
West Bank were debating the proposal that
they resign en masse, instructions arrived
from Beirut to suspend the resignations. The
PLO feared that the military authorities
would simply accept the resignations, thereby
ridding themselves of the elected and re-
cognized political leadership in the West
Bank and the Gaza Strip, which has re-
peatedly avowed its loyalty to the PLO.

At this stormy debate the PLO supporters
argued that the instructions from Beirut
must be implicitly obeyed, while the Com-
munists and other leftist elements argued
that the mayors' resignations would create
so much pressure on the Israel Government
that ultimately it would have to retreat from
its positions and intentions in the affair.

thereby hastening the end of the military
occupation. Though the PLO is indeed the
party that would solve the conflict and Pales-
tinian problem — said the Communists and
their allies — since it is the sole legitimate
representative of the Palestinians, we must
choose the ways and means of the struggle,
since we are on the scene of the events. The
Left won, the mayors resigned, and events
proved that they were right.

Positions on Partition, the Covenant and Terror

We see then that the term "extremist"
which has been applied to the Communists
is inappropriate in the Bassam Shaq'a affair.
But it is also unjustified with regard to other,
broader issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict.
If today the mainstream of the PLO is will-
ing to accept the partition of the country
and settle for a "mini-Palestine," i.e., a

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Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, thereby earning the label "moderates", they have done so several years after the Communists. In fact, as far back as 1947 the Palestinian Communists--except for a small minority which later recanted--agreed to the plan of partitioning Palestine as a solution to the conflict. They came to view the armistice lines as the borders which would separate the Arab state of Palestine and Israel, and remained faithful to the idea of partition all through the long and difficult years that followed.

But there is another, important, position held by the Communists which shows they do not deserve the extremist epithet, and that is that they were the first to call on the leadership of the PLO to adopt a realistic attitude and alter those clauses in the Palestinian Covenant which imply a denial of Israel's right to exist. This position was expressed in AL WATAN, the West Bank Communist newspaper, in 1975. Ideas of this nature are no longer exceptional and the mainstream of the PLO has often hinted that the Covenant is no longer an obstacle, but a liability which the Palestinians will rid themselves of when negotiations about their situation show progress, or when the problem has been solved.

The Communists also take a basically moderate position on terror. While supporting resistance to the occupation, as do all other groups among the Palestinians--resistance including armed struggle--they assert that acts of terror against civilians or individuals are symptoms of despair, and of "lack of faith in the people," and therefore counter-productive.

Recently, I was present during a conversation between one of the Communist leaders and a relative of his. The former stated that attacks on civilians and "personal terror" are damaging to the cause and therefore objectionable. The relative asked, "And what about Wasfi Tal? Would you spare this man, who was responsible for the slaughter of thousands of Palestinians during 'Black September'?" The Communist replied calmly that Wasfi Tal was no exception. "The masses must be moved to change the regime, and then a radical solution will come about."

It is known that some time after the 1967 war the Communists set up a fidayun (guerrilla) organization which they named "Al Ansar," i.e. The Allies (this was the title given to the followers of the prophet Mohammed in Medina, where he had taken refuge). But the organization gained little notice for its activities, and before long, in 1970, it broke up and its members joined the PLO.

The Communists do not believe in giving priority to armed struggle, i.e., terrorist activities, at this stage of the conflict. Rather, they maintain that political activity is the likeliest to produce substantial results and lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories seized by Israel in 1967. And as the importance of political action grows, so obviously does that of the Communists, who are most experienced in it. This in turn has also heightened the opposition to them.

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The Religious Factor

Opponents of the Communists seek to use the religious factor against them. This is a fairly efficient means in a society where religiosity is widespread. The Communists are depicted as the enemies of religion, private property and family life. The Communists say that Israel is assiduously cultivating this hostility. They claim that the recent events in Gaza could not have taken place without the collusion of the military authorities. The demonstrators would hardly have been able to riot for an hour and a half on one occasion, and for an hour on another, set fires and destroy property, without the military authorities being aware of it. "It's enough for one tile to be burned, and immediately the armed forces are on the spot. In Gaza, when the headquarters of the Palestinian Red Crescent, which is controlled by the Left, were attacked by demonstrators, the armed forces arrived only when the destruction was complete."

The Communists also maintain that the recent virulent attacks made against them by religious elements are inspired by more than just the Islamic revival sparked off by Khomeini's revolution in Iran. There are those who know how to manipulate these trends for political ends, they say, referring to the military authorities.

In April 1979 AL WATAN, the Communist organ in the West Bank, warned

against the anti-Communist sermons preached by religious figures in the occupied territories. These sermons are often of an incendiary nature. It is said that a few months ago a preacher, speaking at a Hebron mosque, demanded that the Communists be destroyed before they grew any stronger. His words angered the congregation, and one of the worshippers interrupted the sermon, shouting, "You are the unbeliever. It's wrong to vilify patriots!" It is also said that the Saudis are encouraging the religious elements in the occupied territories.

No Communist in the territories will ever identify himself openly as one, since, according to Jordanian law, which is in force in the West Bank, the Party is outlawed and its members are liable to up to 15 years imprisonment. The Israeli occupation authorities uphold the law when it suits them. The settlements are established in contravention of international law, and so are many other acts. But where the Communists are concerned, the law is stringently applied. Thus last year the Israeli authorities fought an appeal in the Supreme Court of Justice

to permit the distribution of the East Jerusalem newspaper *At-Taliah* in the territories, with the argument that the Jordan anti-Communist law was still in force on the West Bank. The argument was accepted by the court. The editorial office of *At-Taloah*, which is identified with the Communist Party, is regularly harassed by the authorities. For example, an application for a telephone, made two years ago, has not yet been accepted, although many telephones have been installed in the neighborhood during that time.

One Party on Both Banks

The Communist Party has in fact been outlawed in the territories since the end of the British Mandate. Until 1951, the Party continued to be called "Usbat et-Taharur el-Watani" (The National Liberation League), as it had been called during the Mandate. In that year the Arab-held areas of Palestine (except the Gaza Strip) were annexed by the Kingdom of Transjordan, and the Jordanian Communist Party was created. It exists to this day. It is a curious

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fact that there is no Palestinian Communist Party as such, and the unity of the two banks of the Jordan is maintained by this body until the present. Its institutions are unified and it has one general secretary, Faiq Waraq, a Palestinian who was deported from Ramallah shortly after the 1967 war. He succeeded Fuad Nasser, who died in 1976. The reasons for keeping the Party unified are, it is said, pragmatic. Being an illegal organization, it is more convenient to keep it unified, despite the fact that the Party supports the creation of a Palestinian state apart from the Kingdom of Jordan.

Israeli supporters of a "Jordanian solution" may derive satisfaction from this fact, but even a cursory examination of the Party's publications shows that it is profoundly hostile to the Hashemite regime. Even today, when there is an ostensible pact between King Hussein and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, these publications warn their readers to make no mistake as to the nature of the Jordanian monarchy. The Communists, of course, rejected the King's 1972 proposal of a federation between the two banks.

In 1975 an organization named "At-Tanzim esh-Shuyu'i fil Dhafa el Gharbiya" (The West Bank Palestinian Communist Organization) was established, to serve as the local branch of the Jordanian Communist Party. The "Tanzim" has considerable autonomy — it organizes activities, publishes newspapers and pamphlets, and even addresses the Palestinian National Council directly. Thus, for example, the West Bank Communists, in a memorandum addressed to the Palestinian National Council, called for a resolution in favor of establishing a Palestinian state in the areas occupied in 1967 — which amounts to forswearing the goal of a multi-national democratic state, an aim the Communists had never supported.

Asked about relations with the Israel Communist Party, members of the "Tanzim" say that it is a sister party, whose struggle is extolled, but one party does not intervene in the other's doings. There is, on the other hand, a link with the Communist Party in Gaza, and it is not impossible that its members will ultimately join the "Tanzim".

Widespread Activities

Palestinian Communists in the West Bank are active in several organizations, the foremost of which is "The Palestinian National Front," established in 1973, uniting "all the patriotic forces who struggle against the occupation." It is said that the Communists are the moving force in the Front, though when asked about it they respond with a smile. "The National Direction Committee" is also heavily influenced by the Communists and the Left, though unlike the former organization, which has been outlawed, the latter, established following the Camp David accords, acts openly. Of late, however, the authorities seem determined to harass it.

There are also Leftists and Communists in key positions in the labor unions, and in the Palestinian Students' Union. This may be the reason that the PLO, with its strong rightist element, has been trying to minimize the importance and influence of these unions, in favor of the Beirut-based unions which it dominates. Members of the "Tanzim" are found in many municipal and village councils, in women's organizations and professional associations. They organize strikes and look after labor interests.

There are many professionals among the Communists--teachers, doctors, journalists, lawyers and others. Figures such as Dr. Ahmed Hamze Natsheh of Hebron, or Haldun Abd el-Haq, are often named as important members of the "Tanzim", though they will deny it if asked.

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In addition to AL WATAN (The Homeland), which is the "Tanzim's official organ--published and distributed underground--there is also AT-TALIAH, which is not officially identified as a Communist publication. This 12-page weekly, established two years ago, is edited by Bashir Barghuthi, formerly editor of AL-FAJAR. It carries information about events in the occupied territories, especially labor issues, and sections on literature, economics, social problems, and even archaeology. Invariably, it includes an article in praise of the USSR and another attacking the United States. The labor union publication "Kifah el-Umal" (The Workers' Struggle) and that of the students' union, "Kifah el-Talaba" (The Students' Struggle), also reflect Communist influence. Marxist literature is widespread in the West Bank--there are Arabic translations of classical Marxist texts, as well as current Communist literature. A young Arab in the territories is much more familiar with Marxism than a young Jew in Israel.

All Communist publications warn against the conspiracies of the Palestinian right wing. After the recent meeting of the leadership of the "Tanzim", a 70-page report of its proceedings was duplicated and circulated. The report states that the Palestinian bourgeoisie, while demanding, like everybody else, an end to the Israeli occupation, remains reserved with regard to an independent Palestinian state. There are elements in the bourgeoisie that prefer to retain an organic link with Jordan, and are willing to accept the American peace initiative. Thus the differences of opinion among the Palestinians, the report claims are essentially class differences. The Camp David accords are excoriated as the source of all evil, while Sadat is described as having shown signs of treason even before the October (1973) war, "until he finally crossed over to the trenches on the other side of the front..."

What would you say to the Israelis at this time, I asked one of the Communist leaders in the West Bank. His answer was, "Seek the road to a just and lasting peace by recognizing the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and by helping the Palestinians gain an independent state of their own. Then, and only then, will peaceful coexistence begin between the two peoples and the two states, the Palestinian and the Israeli. The Israelis must put pressure on their leaders to adopt this perspective, and the peace movement in Israel plays a pioneering role in this endeavor. These elements are aware of the realities, and they must spread the awareness, as we Communists struggle among the Palestinian masses to promote the one realistic solution, namely, the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and the abandonment of all other plans and ideas, which are unrealistic, and therefore hinder the solution of the conflict that endangers the region."

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ISRAEL

VICTOR SHEMTOV, FORMER MINISTER OF HEALTH, INTERVIEWED

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[Interview with Victor Shemtov, former minister of health, by David Shaham in Jerusalem on 6 April 80]

[Text]

Victor Shemtov, the new general secretary of Mapam, was born in Bulgaria and arrived in Palestine in 1939.

His first public activity was in the trade unions. In 1961 he was elected to the Knesset, where he served for eight years in the prestigious Finance Committee.

In 1969 he joined Goida Meir's Cabinet, first as a minister without portfolio, and later as minister of health. He served in the latter capacity in Rabin's Cabinet, until the elections of 1977.

The interview with New Outlook took place at his home in Jerusalem, on April 6.

New Outlook : Mr. Shemtov, you are one of the authors of what is known as the Yariv-Shemtov Formula. I have recently heard both authors describing the formula as no longer adequate. What can you tell us about its origins? What was the formula meant to achieve when it was first presented?

Victor Shemtov : The so-called Yariv-Shemtov Formula was created at the time when both Aharon Yariv and I were in the Government. Its purpose was to broaden the possibilities of solving the Palestinian problem. It was necessary to find recognized Palestinian spokesmen with whom one could talk about peace. Thus the formula contained several elements: primarily, the concept that Israel must negotiate with any Palestinian body that would recognize it, that

would be willing to forgo terror as a means of achieving political objectives, and would accept UN Resolution 242, which has been the basis of all the negotiations and political processes in this area since 1967. The formula was not accepted by the Government, though it was not rejected either. It was discussed and received the support of several members of the Cabinet, but the majority opposed it. I believe the formula is still valid, though no longer quite adequate. The Israel Government keeps saying, "We shall never speak with the PLO!" And I believe that to make such a statement concerning any political force on the scene is politically foolish. We should say that we are willing to talk to any Palestinian body that is willing to recognize us. But this formula is no longer

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sufficient, because Israel must also declare that it is willing to recognize the right of self-determination of the Palestinians, provided it does not jeopardize Israel's existence and security.

N.O.: The formula deals with the question of whom to talk to--it does not clarify Israel's intentions with regard to the problem itself. Was it really necessary to concentrate on the identity of the other side?--Would it not have been more natural to say, "We shall talk to any Palestinian representative," and concentrate on what we shall say to the said representative, or what we can propose to the Palestinians?

The Palestinians Must Chose Their Representatives

V.S.: I agree that the question of whom to talk is not the main issue. I have always objected to the widespread notion that Israel can decide for the Palestinians who will speak for them. The Palestinians will never accept this, nor will the rest of the world. The Palestinians themselves must chose their representatives, and we have to be ready to negotiate with them, on the understanding that they recognize Israel--without their recognizing Israel it would be difficult to hold a dialogue. In my opinion, Israel's mistake has been its excessive preoccupation with the first question, which is not essential, and its failure to deal with the crux of the matter, namely, what we shall talk about.

N.O.: Two or three years ago, Mr. Abba Eban, in an interview with NEW OUT-LOOK, described it as strange that Israel insists on appointing King Hussein as the representative of the Palestinians, although they refuse to consider him as such, and he does not claim to be their spokesman. Yet the Alignment's political program, including that of Mapam, reserves an important place for what it calls the Jordanian option.

The Concept of Confederation

V.S.: We are back to the subject of whom to talk to. I don't think the Palestinians have a single, exclusive spokesman. In 1967 we were at war with the Kingdom of Jordan, and it was in the course of this war that the Israel Army entered the West Bank. So there is no doubt that Jordan will be one of the bodies with which we shall have to negotiate to solve the Palestinian problem, as well as that of the border between Israel and the state that will be its eastern neighbor. But there are other factors on the scene: above all, the Palestinian leadership in the territories, which is the only one that was elected democratically. The mayors and heads of the municipal councils were properly elected, and some of them are outspoken supporters of the PLO. Thus any negotiations concerning the eastern front will have to be conducted with all those elements, in accordance with out formula.

N.O.: The question I meant to ask was not whether Jordan would be party to the negotiations, but whether it was to be a party to the solution.

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V.S.: Having studied the situation in the Middle East, and the conflict between us and the Arab world and the Palestinians, we have come to the conclusion that the best solution, both from the viewpoint of Israel's security and that of the viability of the peace settlement, would be based on the Jordanian option. However, I don't think that there is only one solution to the Palestinian problem. The Jordanian-Palestinian option is one, and in my opinion, the most important. Consider this--when dealing with a problem as intricate as that of the Israel-Arab conflict, including the self-determination of the Palestinians, surely it would be best to solve it by means of a larger, more comprehensive political entity, which could encompass it more readily. I am referring to the concept of a confederation, which Abba Eban also spoke about, and which we do not reject, which is based on the three entities, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians, each being independent yet linked together in all matters concerning international relations and defense. Such a commonwealth could bring about the conditions which I consider essential for the future peace in the Middle East--a solution to the problem of the refugees within a broader frame of reference, i.e., the Jordanian-Palestinian one; the demilitarization of the West Bank, which we would return to Arab sovereignty, after some agreed border adjustment--this is an important factor for Israel's security. I would even say that for a certain time, until the peace process gets well under way. Israel would retain some military outposts in

the territories it would give up. Whatever answers these three essential requirements -- the resettlement of the refugees in the Palestinian-Jordanian territory, the demilitarization of the West Bank, and the Israeli outposts for a limited period until the peace develops its own dynamic -- would be acceptable in my opinion. Incidentally, a separate Palestinian state is also a possible solution, if the Palestinians in Jordan and the West Bank voted to establish one after the peace.

N.O.: When you speak of Palestinian self-determination, and a confederation as a solution to the conflict, surely that entails the existence of an independent Palestinian leadership which would enter into negotiations with both sides. Thus only if such a solution was acceptable to both sides, would a federation, confederation or commonwealth be set up.

Self-Determination -- But Not at Israel's Expense

V.S.: Indeed. There could of course be a joint representation on their side. And this brings me to the definition of national self-determination as I see it. There

can be no unconditional self-determination for any nation. I know that Lenin in his time supported the self-determination of national minorities within the USSR, to the point of separation from it. But we know that that formula was never applied in practice. The limits of one nation's self-determination are the existence or security of the other. For example, if the Palestinians decide that their self-determination must be carried out in the form of a "secular democratic" state that would replace Israel, I would certainly not agree to it. This cannot be an unconditional, absolute right. We support Palestinian self-determination that would not come about at the expense of Israel's existence and security. This means that there are certain conditions that it must meet -- it must be the outcome of a general agreement among all parties concerned, and it must take into account the existence and security of the state of Israel. This is why we propose Palestinian self-determination within a Jordanian-Palestinian federation, because a considerable part of Jordan's population is in fact Palestinian, and must also be given a chance to participate democratically in the self-determination, as much

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as the Palestinians in the territories. Of course we shall have to discuss the border between Israel and the confederation. Incidentally, this might help solve the problem of Jerusalem, which could also serve as the capital of the federation, or confederation.

N.O.: You define self-determination as being the way that a people determines its national aspirations on a territorial basis, without infringing on the national aspirations and territorial base of another nation. That is nice. But surely it should also be made to face the other way — that Israel may not exercise its own self-determination in a manner which bars the Palestinians from exercising the self-same right, and which claims as its territory land that is inhabited almost exclusively by Palestinian Arabs.

V.S.: I think what matters is the way things actually stand. I am not aware of a Palestinian equivalent to the Shemtov-Yariv Formula. So far, at least, all the spokesmen

of the PLO have referred only to the Palestinian Covenant, which says quite explicitly that a "secular democratic" state would replace Israel. Yet here, on our side, there is a whole movement, a whole political party — namely, Mapam — as well as many other important groups and personalities, who say openly, "Let us negotiate with any Palestinian body, including the PLO, that would recognize Israel." We recognize the right of the Palestinians to self-determination. True, this cannot be said of the Israel Government. Not yet. But I still don't see even an important element in the PLO, an official one, that proposes to recognize Israel if Israel recognized them.

A Jordanian Republic in the Future

N.O.: My question did not refer to the official or unofficial positions of the PLO. We both agree that there can be no Palestinian self-determination that would infringe on Israel's right to recognized and secure borders. I wished to point out that the other

side of the equation must be that Israeli self-determination, which has long been realized, must also take into account the rights of other nations in the region, including the Palestinians. Yet when we lay down the law that Palestinian self-determination may not express itself in a separate state, apart from Jordan, we are in fact denying them one of the principles of self-determination.

V.S.: I said that there wasn't one single, exclusive solution. There are several possibilities, and we must seek the best one. In my opinion, it is that of a Palestinian-Jordanian federation. But it is possible that once peace is achieved, and with it a genuine solution to the Palestinian problem, with all its aspects—in the accepted manner and in accordance with the Camp David accords—the Palestinians may decide that they do not wish to live in a federation with Jordan. We may then conclude peace agreement with them which would ensure the solution of the refugee problem within the Arab world, and a demilitarization of the West Bank. We would respect their wishes.

N.O.: There is a theoretical possibility that Jordan should decide to divide itself horizontally rather than vertically, that is to say, a north-south division, instead of the familiar east-west. I cannot quite see how by which they define their territorial integrity, beyond its basic security needs, the prevention of acts of aggression against it. Perhaps we ought to concentrate on the issues of Israel's security and peace, rather than on the way in which other nations chose to effect their self-determination.

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V.S.: This is not a theoretical discussion. Jordan may, of course, do whatever it likes, but then circumstances may give rise to military escalation. But I think that the very considerable Palestinian population in Jordan is also entitled to seek the solution it desires concerning its future in Jordan. These are many possibilities, such as that in 5 or 10 years' time Jordan will no longer be a monarchy but a republic, ruled by the Palestinians, who are the majority of its population. We shall have to live with such a Jordan too.

To Solve a Big Problem in a Small Space

Another possibility, often talked about, is that a Palestinian state would be pro-Soviet. I don't think this very likely, but let us imagine that in Jordan, as in Syria, there would be a considerable Soviet influence. We shall have to live with that too. We are going to have to resolve the problems of the framework in which the Palestinian problem will be settled and, as I said before, there are certain conditions. We shall bring them up at the negotiating table with the Palestinians and the Jordanians. Meantime, I see that relations between King Hussein and Yasser Arafat are fairly cordial. They have various joint committees. I think the day may come in the not too distant future when we shall have to negotiate with all of them. They will then have to explain to me why a third state, with an area of 6,000 sq. kms., on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, would be the best way to achieve self-determination and a stable regime. Especially since I can't imagine how they are going to solve the problem of the refugees within those 6,000 sq.kms. And if the refugees continue to live in those camps in the Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, no peace would ever last. I should ask them to explain to me why this problem had not better be resolved within the much wider Palestinian-Jordanian territory, which has far greater possibilities. Of course, once there is a peace settlement. Of course, once there is a peace settlement, Israel may make a certain contribution, such as accepting a certain number of refugees, reuniting families, etc. But there is another element which is highly important to Israel. In contrast to Begin's Government, we believe in returning most of the West Bank to Arab sovereignty, demanding only border adjustments for vital security reasons. Now, given the hostility that existed for so long, and the need for a period of transition during which peace would gradually become a reality, we should want to have the West Bank demilitarized, or at least devoid of serious offensive weapons. How will such a situation be maintained in a small, independent state?

N.O.: There is no doubt that Israel has the right to bring up its own demands, such as demilitarization, guarantees or securities. Even border adjustments can be brought up as a demand in the negotiations, though not by creating facts in the form of settlements. But I'm troubled by your expression "They will have to explain to me how they propose to solve the problem of the refugees." Granted, Israel has an interest in finding a solution to this problem, and there have been statements by Israeli leaders that,

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in the context of a peace settlement, Israel would compensate those refugees who had owned property in what became the State of Israel. But don't you agree with Professor Harkabi who said that the question whether the Palestinian state would be economically viable or not, and whether it would be capable of solving the refugee problem or not, had best be left to the Palestinians themselves?

The Refugees Are the Dynamite

V.S.: To avoid misunderstanding, let me clarify that when I said "They will have to explain" I meant, to themselves, to the world, to Israel. Nowadays, when we categorically refuse to meet with the PLO we are in an individious position internationally. But in this situation, when we are negotiating, I think our position would be well understood, when we ask why they think it would be easier to solve the refugee problem in a small area rather than in a big one. The stability of the peace could depend on it. The ending of the war between us and the Arabs, which has been going on for over 30 years, requires an end to the causes of the war. The issue of the refugees has always been the dynamite here.

You are right to point out that when we discuss border adjustments it must not be by way of dictating terms, but as part of the negotiations. I spoke of agreed border adjustment, such as Israel considers vital to her security. As for settlements, our position on this issue is well known. We have always opposed them, even the ones in the Jordan Valley, which were established by the Alignment. As a member of the Cabinet I never voted for settlements in the Jordan Valley. And the governments of which I was a member always declared that everything was open to negotiations, that border adjustments would be agreed and settled between the sides, and that the future of the settlements after the peace would be determined in the course of the negotiations.

N.O.: Some two years ago a well-known Palestinian leader, who does not hold office in the PLO but is nevertheless highly regarded by it, Professor Walid Khalidi, published an article in "Foreign Affairs", in which he stated that a Palestinian state could have its military force limited by international agreement, and be under international supervision. He did not use the term demilitarized. This suggests that the idea of an arms limitation, if not outright demilitarization, is not entirely unacceptable to the Palestinian leadership. Do you believe, then, that there is a contradiction between arms limitation and political independence?

No Palestinian Yariv-Shemtov Formula

V.S.: That article you refer to sounds very nice, but I cannot ignore certain facts. I cannot ignore the fact that the Yariv-Shemtov Formula has existed for six years, that there have been meetings in Paris between members of Sheli and various Palestinian figures, or representatives, who invariably assured them that within days there would be a declaration about Israel's right to exist... It never came. Does the PLO realize what a revolution it would create in Israeli public opinion to hear a declaration from Beirut that they recognize Israel's legitimate right to exist? They could even make it conditional on Israel's recognition of Palestinian self-determination. Sadat made it conditional when he came to Jerusalem. Hussein, too, has said that he was ready to make peace with Israel, in certain conditions. I cannot ignore the fact that the PLO has so far not given the slightest indication that they are willing to consider this formula. This actually serves to weaken to peace forces in Israel.

N.O.: It's a wonderful idea, to have the PLO leadership declare even a conditional recognition of Israel. But if I'm not mistaken, you failed to persuade the Israel government to issue a similar declaration vis-a-vis the Palestinians.

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V.S.: That's true. It should work both ways. But you must realize that the Israel Government is influenced by the very awkward fact that so far the Palestinian Covenant has not been repudiated, and with it the idea that Israel is to be replaced by a secular democratic state.

N.O.: Don't you think that the Palestinian movement is influenced by the fact that the State of Israel has so far failed to recognize their right to self-determination, that its stand is that no matter what the Palestinians do, we would never talk to them and never recognize them? The parallel is unpleasant.

V.S.: That true. I said I was opposed to Begin's "Never". That was why I sponsored the formula, so as to open the way to new possibilities. Unfortunately, it found no echoes on the Palestinian side. In fact, the Palestinian extremists are serving to stiffen this Government's rigid attitudes. But to return to the question you have raised about demilitarization. I do not have to concern myself with the economic viability of a little Palestinian state. Opinions are divided on this subject; I read a book that said that it would be very stable economically. I believe that such a state could not exist without economic ties with both Israel and Jordan, and I doubt if a separate Palestinian state will be able to do this. However, the question of demilitarization does concern me. In the present situation in the Middle East, with all the Arab states, with the great powers wielding their influence by means of arms buildups, it would be exceedingly difficult to maintain a demilitarized status in one small independent state. Also, you know what modern weapons are like--nowadays there are highly effective electronically-control systems which do not require great spaces or big military installations. They can be set up anywhere, and could easily threaten the stability of the peace.

The Post-Nationalist Era

N.O.: Such installations could also be stationed east of the Jordan, and hit Israel from there. Similarly, a squadron of the latest fighter planes can cover the entire Middle East better than did all the air-forces in the 1967 war.

V.S.: That's true enough. Also a single missile range can annihilate an entire squadron of super fighter planes, etc. Still, distances do matter. Missile ranges 15 kms from Tel Aviv, or in Amman, are very different threats. But if we are speaking of peace, of a stable and lasting peace in this region, then there is no doubt in my mind that it can best be attained within a Jordanian-Palestinian entity, in which the Palestinians are in any event the majority.

N.O.: You seem to be looking ahead to the post-nationalist era in the Middle East, such as has more or less begun in other places, though there are always relapses in the form of national minorities refusing to submerged in the larger context... However, we can hardly deny the fact that we in

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Israel have already attained our national state, whereas the Palestinians haven't. They have to achieve this before they can be expected to go on to the next phase. Don't you think that the process should be reversed--that the way to a confederation, or a commonwealth, must run through the national state?

V.S. This is not a philosophical or theoretical issue. We have to take into consideration the feelings of both peoples. You see the Palestinians dreaming of a state of their own. You must also see the Israelis living with the traumas of five wars, with the stubborn refusal of the Arab countries to recognize Israel's right to exist and to accept it as part of the Middle East. We must try to understand one another. When you talk to a Palestinian and you say, "Why not realize your ambitions within a Jordanian-Palestinian state? After all, your brothers are in Jordan, and you lived as one state until 1967"--his answer is, "There will be a link with Jordan, we need that link, but first we must establish our own state." Well then, if there is to be a link, why not create it in advance, so that the refugee problem will be solved, with the aid of international bodies and of Israel, which would pay compensation? I can appreciate that the order of things is important to the Palestinians--it is also a problem of security for Israel--but tomorrow an Israeli government may declare that it is willing to give up the West Bank, with a few agreed adjustments, and to help solve the refugee problem, but first establish a Jordanian-

Palestinian framework, or a confederation in which we shall also participate, with which we shall have a treaty concerning international and security matters, so that it would be a commonwealth, economically and militarily... Such a model strikes me as quite feasible, but I would go further and say to the Palestinians: "If after this system is established you wish to quit it -- we shall respect your wishes."

The Arab View of Zionism

N.O.: I agree that it is a very attractive model, and I would personally support it, provided it was based on the voluntary participation of all the parties. But you referred to traumas and phobias, and here is an interesting analogy. You suggest that Israel has something to fear from a small Palestinian state which would not be able to solve the refugee problem. This implies that the refugees are a restless element which would press for territorial expansion. This reminds me of a familiar argument that Arab nationalists have always used against the Zionist state, namely that Israel cannot possibly take in all of the 15 million Jews in the world, and therefore a Zionist state,

which desires to bring in more and more Jews, must inevitably be expansionist. Now, just as we know that this is not so, and that we shall not absorb more immigrants than we can, so do several Palestinian spokesmen say that not all the Palestinian refugees would want to return home, and that many would be satisfied to know that there is such a homeland. Just like the Jews abroad.

V.S.: The analogy is invalid for two reasons: first, when I speak of the irredentist nature of the refugee problem, it is because I feel that a tiny state of 6,000 sq.kms would simply be unable to take them all in. It would become so crowded as to force it to expand. But that would only be possible in the direction of Jordan. The result is that once such a state is born, Jordan would naturally be suspicious of it, and may refuse to take in refugees. They will remain where they are, in Lebanon and Syria, in the camps, and continue to be the powder keg they have always been. As for Zionism and the 15 million Jews, let me say this -- not to you, to the Palestinians who will read this exchange -- that the most ambitious Zionists of all times,

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from Herzl on, never imagined for a minute that all the Jews would come to the State of Israel. I believe that within Israel of the Green Line, (for when we speak of border adjustments we mean just that — not additional territories for Jews to settle in), we have room for several million Jews. There is no realistic reason to imagine us suffering from a population explosion which would force us to seek conquests. Not for the scores of years that we can foresee.

N.O.: I have heard similar assurances from Palestinians, that within the 6,000 sq. kms. there is room for many hundreds of thousands more. The territorial question is really secondary. The real problem is the one you raised — the ability to live together in peace.

V.S.: This is a hypothesis, whereas what I am saying is simply a very reasonable argument. Surely no one will disagree that to solve the problem of half a million, or seven- or eight-hundred thousand refugees, who are now living in camps, would be much easier in a big country than in a

small one. And we know about these things — we have more experience in absorbing refugees than anyone else. Even the Jordan Valley, which Israel has been settling for security purposes, not to grow vegetables in, can support no more than a few thousand farmers.

N.O.: They don't all have to subsist on agriculture.

V.S.: To settle the refugees would require land and space, of which there is more in a Jordanian-Palestinian entity.

N.O.: How many of the immigrants we have absorbed went into agriculture? Most of them settled in the very narrow strip of land, some 40 kms wide and 150 kms long,

between Nahariah and Ashkelon.

This is much less than the area of the West Bank.

A Better Chance With the Alignment

V.S.: And yet we are all aware that we cannot settle millions of people in that strip, but must try and spread them around. There are, in addition, certain possibilities that we in Israel have at our disposal, which do not exist in the West Bank. There is a limit to industrialization, where the infrastructure does not yet exist. So when we sit with them around the negotiating table we shall have to say, "Let us seek ways to solve your need for self-determination, our security problems and your refugee and economic problems, in as wide a framework as possible."

N.O.: Now I should like to ask you a rather more immediate question. It seems likely that the Alignment will return to power in the next elections. Do you believe that under an Alignment government, given its present political positions, there could be a breakthrough on the Palestinian issue?

V.S.: I do believe it--but it's more than a matter of belief. I am convinced that there is a much better chance to solve the entire Palestinian problem once the alignment is in power. Begin may have brought Israel closer to God--he has certainly estranged it from the world. Begin's basic position, that not an inch of the West Bank shall be returned to Arab sovereignty, is a barrier which cannot be crossed, and isolates Israel in the world. The Alignment's basic stand is that most of the West Bank is to be returned to Arab sovereignty, once we have agreed on a new boundary line, one that we settle by negotiations, a secure and recognized border, in accordance with Resolution 242. This position makes it possible to open

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a new road. I would suggest to the Alignment government, whenever it comes back--next week or next year--to launch a bold new initiative, a dramatic move, because we know that the sand is running out of the glass, and the Middle East is ready for peace. The initiative must first of all tackle the issue of whom we talk to--namely, with whoever recognizes us; secondly, announce that we recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, even if this means a right to an independent state of their own. Thirdly, begin to negotiate a general settlement, which would include Palestinian self-determination (our position being in favor of a Palestinian-Jordanian solution), a solution to the refugee problem, security arrangements, demilitarization and international guarantees. Finally, negotiate the boundaries between Israel and its neighbor to the east, and a broad system of economic cooperation between Israel and the Jordanian-Palestinian federation or confederation, or within the Middle East commonwealth that we shall establish. I believe that the possibility that an Alignment government would make such a breakthrough towards a solution of all aspects of the Palestinian problem is a very real one.

I believe that the leaders of Israel, and the leaders of the Arab countries and the Palestinians will understand that if we do not succeed in making peace, and solving the Palestinian problem in the next stage of the negotiations, the region will soon be on a downhill path to war. It may be difficult, after the Israeli-Egyptian peace, to imagine another comprehensive war against Israel; the Egyptians may well take a long time to decide to join another military venture against Israel. But even without Egypt, I don't believe that the Arab world cannot launch another war against Israel, on her northern and eastern flanks. Moreover, such an escalation entails the greater dangers of invasion and a nuclear arms race, which Israel does not want, and which threaten the entire region. This is why I believe that the realistic commonsense of the leaders of the Arab world, the Palestinians and Israel alike, will seize the opportunity offered by a new government here, headed by the Alignment, and make a real breakthrough.

N.O.: Are you saying these things on the basis of the positions of the leadership of the Labor Party, as you know them, or as Mapam's proposal to the Alignment?

V.S.: I am basing these words on the knowledge that there is in the Labor Party, or at least in a segment of it, an increased awareness of the changes that have occurred in the region. There is an awareness of the peace with Egypt, of the danger that having paid for the whole of the Sinai Peninsula

for that peace, we may end without the Sinai and without peace. I feel that the leaders of the Labor Party, who have always been known for their realistic commonsense, and freedom from doctrinaire ideologies, have come to the realization that the problem must be solved, and that there is little room left to maneuver. They are aware of the

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global aspects of our conflict, of the position of the super-powers, and that if we do not come to an agreement, the great powers will force one on us, which would be much worse. They are aware that the absence of peace is deforming our society, affecting its ability to rehabilitate its economy and cure its social ills. But the prospects for peace depend also on the Arab willingness to compromise. Peace is near because both we and the Arabs need it urgently. So I believe a sense of reality will triumph and find solutions.

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MAURITANIA

CONTINUING EXTERNAL, DOMESTIC PROBLEMS MAY THREATEN PREMIER

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 9 Apr 80 pp 24, 25

[Article by Abdelaziz Dahmani: "Is Haidalla Threatened?"]

[Text] The departure from office on 4 January 1980 of Lt Col Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Ahmed Louly, president of Mauritania, and Lt Col Ahmed Salem Ould Sidi, deputy chairman of the CMSN [Military Committee for National Safety], was supposed to "clarify the situation" by strengthening the power of the prime minister, Lt Col Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla, and his allies (see JEUNE AFRIQUE No 993).

However, the rumor is making the rounds today that the days of Khouna Ould Haidalla, who has bestowed on himself the position of President of Mauritania, are numbered in turn because he is no longer able to adjudicate disputes among the various factions that divide the military, whereas an increasingly well organized resistance movement is evidencing itself practically everywhere in the country. At times the government has even lost its "cool," especially by breaking up in early March 1980 a demonstration involving women who had just been dislodged from a shantytown in Nouakchott and who were "shipped back" to their places of origin--Akjoujt, Atar, Moudjeria, Aleg, and so on.

These removals into exile have also involved several cadres in political and business circles. The latest ones affected are Tijani Ould Karim, former president of the Youth Union; Ould Ichidou, former leader of the Kadihin (Opposition of the left which supported [ex-President] Mokhtar Ould Daddah in 1974); and Mustafa Saleck, former budget director. On top of this is the threat of dissolution which weighed at mid-March 1980 on the single trade union organization, the UMT [Mauritanian Labor Federation], which survived thanks to the solidarity of European and Arab trade union movements. The "purge" has been even more effective as regards some cadres of the major national companies such as SNIM [National Industrial and Mining Company] (iron ore exploitation in Zouerate), SOCOGIM [Construction and Real Estate Company of Mauritania] (construction), SMAR [Mauritanian Insurance and Reinsurance Company] (insurance), and SONIMEX [National Import-Export Company] (import and export of staple foodstuffs). What is the reason for these sanctions and purges? The reticence to back "spontaneously" the regime's "peace agreement" signed on 5 August 1979 with the

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POLISARIO in Algiers. Some of the ousted cadres, who have voiced their feelings, said that they could not support an agreement that included several secret clauses.

Escalation of Tone

Specifically, one of these secret clauses, reported by JEUNE AFRIQUE (issue No 989), has caused the Nouakchott government much embarrassment. Indeed, the clause stipulated that Mauritania was to hand over to the POLISARIO, 7 months after the accord of 5 August 1979 (specifically, on 5 March 1980), the Tiris-el-Gharbia region--the southern portion of the former Western Sahara which was Mauritania's share in the application of the Madrid agreements of 14 November 1975. However, this territory whose chief town is Dakhla was occupied by the Moroccans the day after the Algiers agreement. Accordingly, on 5 March 1980 Mauritania was not in a position to be able to honor its commitments.

Yet, on the said date a POLISARIO delegation headed by Ely Ould Mahmoud, a member of its Politburo, landed in Nouakchott to demand the fulfillment of the signed accords unless compensation were to be made, namely, Mauritania's immediate recognition of the SDAR [Saharan Democratic Arab Republic]. President Khouna Ould Haidalla refused to comply. This is explained by the lesser influence of Maj Ould Boukhreiss, Mauritanian minister of interior (pro-POLISARIO). The escalation in tone led to a break in relations. Immediately on the next day, 6 March 1980, Khouna Ould Haidalla sent to Algiers Lt Col Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, chief of the general staff and the signer of the secret agreements, to get the Algerian leaders to mitigate the demands of the POLISARIO. On 9 March 1980 the Mauritanian head of state also called on the POLISARIO and on Morocco, requesting them to understand his country's difficult position.

Sources Drying Up

The following day, on 10 March, Ahmed Baba Miske, former Mauritanian member of the opposition who became an SDAR leader, officially returned to Nouakchott. In truth, this was his fifth trip since the fall of Mokhtar Ould Daddah on 10 July 1978, though his four earlier visits had been done "clandestinely." Welcomed by the minister of foreign affairs, Mokhtar Ould Zamel, Ahmed Baba Miske was expecting to be named prime minister in short order instead of which he found a climate that was more hostile than what the POLISARIO's delegation had witnessed a few days earlier. And a number of cadres squarely refused to meet him. For them "this is the Mauritanian who went to the other side lock, stock, and barrel." This is evidence that the wounds of the fratricidal war have not yet healed, all the more so as the POLISARIO insists on holding on to several hundred Mauritanian prisoners. This is something which public opinion is tolerating less and less considering all the concessions made by the Nouakchott leaders.

To crown it all the financial crisis is far from being settled. Financing sources, mainly Arab, are drying up. Everyone is wondering where Mauritania is heading.

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MAURITANIA

BACKGROUND OF DISMISSAL OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 23 Apr 80 p 28

[Article by Abdelaziz Dahmani: "A Series of Firings"]

[Text] In Mauritania coups, palace revolutions, dismissals, attempts to change or break off alliances have not been seen for 2 years. It is quite true that the neighboring "brother" or "friend" countries have not bestirred themselves to encourage that return to peace aimed at in the ousting of Mikhtar Ould Daddah on 10 July 1978, and the signing at Algiers on 5 August 1979 of a "peace treaty" with the POLISARIO.

Of the five "strong men," authors of the coup of 10 July 1978, (Colonel Mustapha Ould Salleck, Lt Col's Khouna Ould Haidallah and Ahmedou Ould Aldallah, Majors Jiddou Ould Salek and Moulay Ould Boukhreiss), none is left in power today except the chief of state, Khouna Ould Haidalla.

The most recent crisis on 10 April struck down Maj Moulay Ould Boukhreiss, influential permanent member of the Military Council of National Safety (CMSN), minister of the interior, and his enemy Lt Col Ahmedou Ould Aldallah, chief of the General Staff.

Holy Alliance

Believed to be close to the POLISARIO, with a...Libyan inclination, Ould Boukhreiss was the target over the past few weeks of very lively criticism for having wished, with the chief of state's assistance, to make Ahmed Baba Miske, former Mauritanian opposition man turned member of the POLISARIO, the prime minister of Mauritania--or at least, a minister of state charged with foreign relations (J.A. No 1005). Besides, the CMSN meeting on 3 April had been one of the stormiest possible. The main attacks came from Col Ahmedou Ould Aldallah, chief of the General Staff.

The "Holy Alliance" between Khouna Ould Haidalla and Ahmedou Ould Aldallah having thus been sundered, the chief of the General Staff learned by next day of the arrest of his half-brother, the other Ahmedou Ould Aldallah, ex-foreign minister who in 1979 became general manager of SNIM. The

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Societe Nationale des Industries Minieres [sic; Societe Nationale Industrielle et Miniere--National Industrial and Mining Company] is well known to be the biggest enterprise in the country, the one that organizes the extraction of the iron from Zouerate.

The Relief

Accused of "subversion," Ahmedou O. Abdallah, the civilian one, was deported to the north. His arrest incidentally gave rise to great irritation on the part of the money-lenders for the Guelbs project (iron-mining) in for a total of \$600 million. The first reaction of the Kuwaiti and Saudi financiers and the men from the World Bank was to refuse to participate in the appointment of a "management committee," their protest tending less to defend Ahmedou O. Abdallah, the "ideologue" of the 10 July coup, than to underscore the lack of business seriousness demonstrated by perpetual personnel changes at the head of SNIM.

Haidalla finally settled the crisis by getting rid of the minister of the interior and the chief of the General Staff. And to avoid any attempt at a new coup, he accompanied these firings with changes at command level in the gendarmerie, the National Guard, the Criminal Investigation Department, the Intelligence Service [renseignements generaux], the area command for Nouakchott and certain other military regions. The General Staff went back to Lt Col Maouya Ould Taya, an unknown, and the Ministry of the Interior was given to Major Cheikh Sid'Ahmed Babamine, a dyed-in-the-wool liberal. "Ruling" alone from now on, Khouna Haidalla is directly exposed: the firings he instigated make room for the promotion of young officers and non-coms.

Reconversion

While all this was going on, Lt Col Mohamed Ould Louly, former chief of state removed on 4 January 1980 was occupying himself moving from one water-hole to the next with his opulent herd of cattle and camels. Recently, in the north of Zouerate and despite the guard assigned to him, he got driven back and read quite a lecture by a POLISARIO patrol operating on "uncontested" Mauritanian territory. An anecdote? It is also proof that the government in Nouakchott can no longer control its own Sahara.

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